

# Red Flag Fire Alert

from the SC Forestry Commission



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CONTACT:**

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## **Forestry Commission issuing statewide Red Flag Fire Alert**

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission is issuing a statewide Red Flag Fire Alert, effective at 6 a.m. Saturday, March 26.

The alert is being issued to discourage people from burning outdoors when weather conditions present an elevated risk of wildfire. Forecasts are calling for low relative humidities and higher-than-normal wind speeds, including 20+mph wind gusts, across much of the state through the weekend.

A Red Flag Fire Alert does not prohibit outdoor burning, provided that all other state and local regulations are followed, but the Forestry Commission uses the alert to strongly encourage citizens to voluntarily postpone any such burning until the alert is lifted. Land managers who are considering conducting prescribed fires should take extra care if they choose to burn under a Red Flag.

“The dangerous conditions we’re going to see over the next few days make a good portion of the state vulnerable to fires that can spread rapidly and be difficult to control,” said SCFC Fire Chief Darryl Jones. “These kinds of spring weather patterns are what make this time of year the traditional peak of our wildfire season.”

Historically, wildfire occurrence in South Carolina is greater in March than in any other month. April is very active as well, having seen some of the most destructive fires in the state’s history, including the Highway 31 Fire near Myrtle Beach in 2009, which burned 19,130 acres and destroyed 76 homes. That fire, the second largest on record, was the result of an escaped debris burn.

While some of the state received rainfall earlier this week, fuels are still very dry in critical areas, due in part to a lingering drought. Additionally, the SC Drought Response Committee declared incipient drought conditions in 11 eastern/coastal counties Tuesday, March 22.

Although a Red Flag Fire Alert does not ban outdoor burning, it does trigger certain county or local ordinances that restrict outdoor fires, so residents should contact their local fire departments to check whether such restrictions apply in their areas. The alert will remain in effect until lifted by the Commission, whose fire managers will continuously monitor the situation.

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*As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects 12.9 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that*

### **Stay in the know with SCFC’s mobile app**

The South Carolina Forestry Commission has a smartphone app that allows citizens, media and fire departments to view current wildfires and burn notifications, check the latest fire weather, receive push notifications about important news such as burning bans and red flag fire alerts, and much more.

To receive push notifications, users must opt in when first starting the app. Push notifications will alert you about current burning bans, Red Flag fire alerts and other wildfire-related warnings. Notifications will never consist of ads or promotional messages.

To download the app, search “South Carolina Forestry Commission” on either the Apple or Google Play stores.



*are difficult to reach.*